

The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education, and Related  
Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and Related  
Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We are writing to request that the Education for Democracy Act be included in the fiscal year 2010 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Bill at \$35 million. The effectiveness of the Act's domestic and international civic education programs—which reach approximately 5 million students each year—has been demonstrated by independent research and evaluation. In addition, economic education international exchange programs supported by the Act reached 3.7 million students in 2007-2008 alone. These programs make a significant contribution to our country's commitment to strengthening freedom and democracy in the United States in emerging democracies throughout the world.

The Education for Democracy Act funds valuable initiatives that have been proven to increase students' fundamental understanding of democracy, improve the school environment, and increase academic achievement. Independent evaluations testify to these initiatives' success in promoting civic and economic knowledge; intellectual and participatory skills; and civic dispositions such as civility, tolerance, respect for the rule of law, and a reasoned commitment to the fundamental values and principles of constitutional democracy. The principal programs supported by the Act are:

- **We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution.** An intensive curricular program that provides students at the upper elementary, middle, and high school levels with a profound understanding of the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the principles of a free democratic republic.
- **We the People: Project Citizen.** A curricular program for middle, secondary, and post-secondary school students and youth groups that promotes competent and responsible participation in local and state government.
- **School Violence Prevention Demonstration Program.** A curriculum, training, and research program designed to improve students' civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Its research and evaluation component measures changes in students' civic knowledge and attitudes as they relate to tolerance of the ideas of others, civic responsibility, authority and the law and social and political institutions. It also supports a special outreach program to Native American schools.
- **Cooperative Education Exchange Programs.** The **Civitas International Civic Education Exchange Program** links leading civic educators and organizations in the United States with their peers in emerging and established democracies, with the goal of improving education for democracy. Today, American educators from more than 30 US states and the District of Columbia work with civic education leaders from more than 70 emerging democracies. Similarly, the Economics International **Economic Education Exchange Program**, involving teachers from 44 states and the District of Columbia, helps

students in more than 38 emerging democracies understand the principles and institutions of a market economy and their relationship to democracy.

We support the Education for Democracy Act because we believe that if we are to remain a nation of, by, and for the people, we must promote classroom programs that combat apathy, cynicism, and widespread ignorance of many of the basic facts and ideals of the American system of government. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,